

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 03750 041052Z
ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 SOE-02 AID-05
CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 DOE-15 H-01
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R 040810Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1611
INFO USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, SF
SUBJECT: SA PRESS REACTION TO US-SA NUCLEAR DISCUSSIONS

1. POSSIBLY BECAUSE NO DETAILS APPEARED ON THE RESULTS OF
AMBASSADOR GERARD C. SMITH'S TALKS IN PRETORIA JUNE 26-28,
PRESS TREATMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA HAS BEEN RESTRICTED LARGELY
TO SPECULATION OVER THE TOPICS OF DISCUSSION: NPT, IN-
SPECTION OF FACILITIES, FUEL FOR THE KOEBERG AND SAFARI
REACTORS AND TECHNOLOGICAL ASSISTANCE WITH THE VALINDABA
ENRICHMENT PLANT.

2. INIALLY TOP SA OFFICIALS CONFINED THEMSELVES TO THE
AGREED CONTINGENCY LANGUAGE THAT AMBASSADOR SMITH'S VISIT
REPRESENTED A STAGE IN A SERIES OF CONTACTS ON MATTERS OF
MUTUAL INTERNATIONAL CONCERN IN THE NUCLEAR FIELD.
HOWEVER, DR. ROUX, CHAIRMAN OF THE ATOMIC ENERGY BOARD,
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LATER WAS WIDELY QUOTED AS HAVING CHARACTERIZED THE
TALKS AS "MOST PRODUCTIVE".

3. JOHANNESBURG AFRIKAANS PAPER, DIE VADERLAND, WHICH
GENERALLY REFLECTS GOVERNMENT THINKING, ADOPTED A POSITIVE
TONE, EVEN IF ITS UNDERSTANDING OF THE SITUATION WAS IMPRECISE:
QUOTE: SOUTH AFRICA IS CURRENTLY WAGING A TITANTIC

STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL IN A HOSTILE INTERNATIONAL CLIMATE OF ISOLATION AND BOYCOTTS. THUS, IT IS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS NOT DESIROUS OF DOING ANYTHING THAT MIGHT CONCEIVABLY HINDER THE US.

ONE AMERICAN FEAR IS THAT SOUTH AFRICA MIGHT PRODUCE THE BIG NUKE. SOUTH AFRICA'S ASSURANCES IN THIS RESPECT APPARENTLY HAVE NOT SUFFICED. BUT SIGNING THE NPT IS NOT THE ONLY SOLUTION POSSIBLE. ANOTHER IS A BILATERAL ARRANGEMENT WITH THE USG, UNDER WHICH SOUTH AFRICA WOULD SUBMIT TO AMERICAN INSPECTION. BUT SUCH AGREEMENT WOULD HAVE TO BE BALANCED, I.E., USG GUARANTEES TO DELIVER THE NECESSARY FUELS, MAKE AVAILABLE CERTAIN TECHNOLOGY, AND NOT TRY TO SNIFF OUT OUR SECRET ENRICHMENT PROCESS TO OUR DISADVANTAGE.

A NUCLEAR AGREEMENT CAN BE WORKED OUT BY COOPERATING PARTIES, BUT NOT IF ONE SEEKS TO DISADVANTAGE OR SUBVERT THE OTHER. END QUOTE

4. MERCURY OF DURBAN (CONSERVATIVE AND INCREASINGLY HOSTILE TO US) SAID:

QUOTE: NEWS OF SOUTH AFRICA'S COMPLIANCE WITH NPT WOULD ALSO BE GREETED WITH SATISFACTION IN MOSCOW AND HAVANA. A MAJOR STUMBLING BLOCK TO RUSSIA'S DESIGN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WOULD BE REMOVED, FOR THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY, HOWEVER SMALL, REMAINS A POWERFUL DETERRENT TO AGGRESSION. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOWEVER, IF THE WEST WOULD ONLY PLAY ITS PROPER ROLE AGAINST RUSSIA'S MARCH INTO AFRICA, THERE WOULD BE NO NEED FOR SOUTH AFRICA TO INTEREST HERSELF IN A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY. INSTEAD, THE US HAS DECLARED THAT SHE WOULD NEVER COME TO SOUTH AFRICA'S ASSISTANCE--THUS THROWING OUT AN OPEN INVITATION TO ANY AGGRESSOR TO TRY THEIR LUCK. MOREOVER, SHE HAS SOUGHT TO DEPRIVE THE REPUBLIC OF THE ARMS WITH WHICH TO DEFEND ITSELF, PORTRAYED THE COUNTRY AS A 'NO-HOPER', AND AT TIMES HAS APPEARED TO BE OUT-DOING THE RUSSIANS IN SETTING UP MARXIST REGIMES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA....IN ITS PRESENT ISOLATED POSITION, SOUTH AFRICA WOULD BE FOOLISH NOT TO DEMAND SOME TOUGH SAFEGUARDS BEFORE ABANDONING ANY WEAPONS PROJECTS THAT COULD BE VITAL TO HER SURVIVAL. END QUOTE

5. SABC RADIO COMMENTARY (JULY 3) WHICH GIVES OFFICIAL INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS, RECALLED AGITATION OVER KALAHARI TEST SITE LAST AUGUST WHEN WEST "ALLOWED PREJUDICE TO GET BETTER OF COMMON SENSE." AT TALKS LAST WEEK "COMMON SENSE PREVAILED." REPORT LINKED NUCLEAR TALKS WITH SAG-ORGANIZED TRADE AND INVESTMENT

CONFERENCE IN HOUSTON AS TWO OCCASIONS IN PAST FEW
DAYS WHICH "POINT TO WIDE AREA IN WHICH, GIVEN
GOODWILL, THERE CAN BE CONSTRUCTIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN
THE US AND SOUTH AFRICA." (FULL TEXT BEING CABLED
BY JOHANNESBURG.)
EDMONDSON

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